HEAVEN

TO THE

UNCONVERTED.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

By the REVEREND

Dr. TAYLOR.

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Printed and Sold in Bow-Church-Yard, London.

A CALL from HEAVEN TO THE UNCONVERTED.

Rev. ii. 5.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy firſt Work: or elſe I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of his place, except thou repent.

IN theſe words there is a ſevere threatening: I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candleſtick out of ts place.

A candleſtick ſignifies the church of God, or a company, or a ſociety of people met together, to worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth. As if he ſhould ſay, I will ſmite thy ſhepherds and ſcatter thy flocks; I will take away thy lights, and will leave thee in Egyptian darkneſs; I will cut off my ordinances which are my golden pipes to convey the water of love unto you.

But you will ſay, Why is the Lord ſo angry with Epheſus is becauſe of the church's Sins; it is becauſe thou haſt not

loved me as thou once didſt.——— Want of love to Chriſt is the Sin that deſerveth that God ſhould take away your miniſters; For what is our preaching for, but to gain your loves to Chriſt, and hate to the devil.

Secondly, The works of this Church of Epheſus were,— They had been very laborious in the external principles of religion, in promoting the ſalvation of ſouls. But yet, notwithſtanding they had gone ſo far, yet they had not done what they did out of a right principle, that is out of pure love to Chriſt. This makes the Lord ſo angry, that he threateneth to unchurch them.

Well, but is there no remedy to preven this heavy judgment? He that holds forth the rod tells you a remedy: as if he ſhould ſay, O ye Epheſians, if you will love me better, and if you will but repent of your Sins, I will not bring thoſe heavy judgments upon you which I threatened to bring.

When the Goſpel goes, God goes; when God goes Chriſt goes, and when Chriſt goes the miniſtering angels of the covenant go: the candleſtick goes, and the light goes with it.

What then follows, when God goes then the devil comes, yea legions of devils come, and then follow the plague, the peſtilence, ſword, and all manner of evils. God doth not go alone, neither doth God remove his candleſtick alone, I do not tell you that God threatens to pull down all your lights: I would not terrify you by telling you God is departing from you when he puts out ſome of your lights; But yet I muſt needs tell you, that when God doth deprive you of ſo many hundreds, of as pious, laborious, and learned, Labourers as any are in the vineyard. I ſay, when God deals thus by you, I cannot think it is in mercy to you, but in juſt judgment.

The church of England is a great people, and there are many poor ſouls in it that are as fire-brands in the fire, that have great need to be plucked out; and as there are, bleſſed be God, many eminent miniſters at this day in England, to, ſnatch ſuch poor ſnuls as fire-brands out of the fire. Yet I ſay where there is one we have need of ten.

But though our diſeaſe is dangerous, yet it is not deſperate, thereis one way for us to prevent thoſe heavy judgments that the Lord doth threaten to inflict upon us, and that is by Repentance, by a ſerious repenting of the ſins of our paſt lives and to amend what has been amiſs in us.

I ſhall now come to make ſome application ;

Uſe 1. In the firſt place, Is this a truth, that repentance is the only way and means to prevent the judgements of God that are threatned againſt a people by God for ſin. Then firſt of all, I would have you obſerve the curſed nature of this curſed, thing called SIN : Sin muſt be repented of, or it will deſtroy us, it will deſtroy our bodies, it will deſtroy our ſouls, it will deſtroy our kingdom : this is the curſed nature of Sin.

My beloved, I think it is one of the hardeſt things that is, to underſtand the exceeding ſinfulneſs of Sin, to underſtand the deadly poiſon that is in it : it is for the want of the true knowledge of it, that cauſeth that deadneſs of heart that you ſo much grown under. Thus you ſee that Sin, that thing we ſo much ſlight, what a terrible thing it is. Alas ! what think many of us of a vain word or an idle thought, or ſwearing and oaths or what a trifling thing it is to neglect prayer.

But let me aſk, you that think Sin to be ſo ſlight a matterd what is the reaſon that God is ſo angry that he made man, What is the reaſon that many a ſinful church hath made God repent that ever he made a Church ?———— I ſay th refore conſider the exceeding venom there is in Sin. Oh take heed heed of Sin : it is a child, that though it be conceaved in joy yet it ſhall bring fourtl ſorrow in the end. Curſed be the day that ever Sin was was brought into the world.

Sin is ſo vile a thing, that it makes God and Jeſus Chriſt cry out at it, and them ſay, they will be gone, If you continue in your Sins I will take my miniſters away and leave you, in weakneſs.

Tuſh! ſay you, what is Sin?——I ſay it is the venom and poiſon of our natures, it is that which is as the hand to unſheath the ſword and to thurſt it into our own bowels. Sin is a millſtone that is ty'd about our necks, that will pull us both ſoul and body into the bottomleſs abeſs of that ſea of the wrath of God, from whence there will be no recovery; Sin is a plague that will follow our proſperity after we are gone out of this world; Sin is a worm upon the tree of life that eats up the fruit of it.

Sin it is which makes the Lord take away the Goſpel from us; Sin is a deviliſh charm within us, that drives away God, Chriſt, and the goſpel from among us.

Theſe are the evils of that curſed thing called Sin, Oh! do not make a little matter of it; do not ſay, when you are drunk, what harm is there that I have drank a cup too much? do not ſay, what harm is there in telling a lie, or ſwearing an oath? Oh! that my beloved, what a ſad thing is this Sin, that it ſhould cauſe God to throw angels out of heaven into hell. pride caſt the angels into hell; take heed that it doth not ſo by you.———Sin made God deſtroy the world; Sin made God repent that he had made the world; Sin made God burn Sodom and Gomorrah: Sin made God threaten Epheſus to remove his candleſtick from among them.

Therefore, I ſay, do not think Sin to be a ſmall matter: make conſcience of the leaſt of them; believe God, that it is a vile thing; conſider with thyſelf what a vain labour this labour of ſin is: It is a vain troubleſome work; when you commit it, you muſt reſolve to die the death, or to undo it again.

Sin may well be called the labour in vain, When thou art doing any thing that is evil, thou muſt repent of it, or it will undo thee. Sin is a long thread of the ſinners ſpinning, that when he hath ſpun it out he muſt ſet down in ſorrow, and labour to undo his work again.

When thou art ſinning, I can compare it to nothing better than the journey Joſeph and Mary made to Jeruſalem, when they left Jeſus Chriſt behind them.

My beloved, it is ſad journeying without Chriſt in your company: When you go on in your Sins, you muſt return again, or elſe you will loſe your ſouls—— This I ſay is the labour in vain of Sinners, they are doing a work that they undo again: they are running a race that they muſt run back again, or elſe it will undo them. You are gathering up ſticks that will help to burn you: you are whetting a knife that muſt cut your own throats; you are ſpinning a thread to hang you.

O my beloved, little do you think what you are doing when you are ſinning.

Do not ſay therefore that Sin is a little matter; for God will damn the ſoul and body for it. He that will damn thee for neglect of praying, he doth teach that theſe Sins are great matters; will you lay theſe things to heart?

I ſay, take heed of Sin, and do not go away with light thoughts of it.

Uſe 2. Is repentance the only way and means to prevent the judgments of God, that are threatened by him for Sin.—Then from hence you may learn the excellence and uſefulneſs of the grace of repentance.

Oh! what an omnipotent grace is this? it is a grace that can do any thing with God. —— Why what can this grace do?——What can it do?——This grace of repentance can redeem your mortgaged bleſſings? it can repoſſeſs you of thoſe bleſſings you have fooliſhly played away,

Repentance can make God ſtay in our kingdom when he is departing. Repentance is a heart-breaking for ſin, and it breaks the heart of God likewiſe. When thy heart yearns toward thee; as thou mayeſt ſee in the yearnings of God's bowels toward Ephraim; Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20. I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf thus: Thou haſt chaſtiſed me as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke; turn thou me and I ſhall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was inſtructed I ſmote upon my thigh: I was aſhamed, yea, even confounded, becauſe I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my

dear ſon? Is he a pleaſant child; for ſince I ſpake againſt him, I do earneſtly remember him ſtill: therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will ſurely have mercy on him, ſaith the Lord

Ephraim, that was a tribe, oee of the tribes of Iſrael, you here have the voice of a penitent ſinner: he ſmites upon his thigh, which is the ſign of great anguiſh of ſpirit; here you have the penitent, the weeping, ſhame-fac'd ſinner.——But in the verſe following you have God ſtanding and looking on; ſaith God, is Ephraim my dear ſon, &c.

If thy heart breaks, thou ſeeſt that God's heart will turn towards thee.—Oh the excellence of repentance, that doth ſo much prevail with the God of heaven! It is theſe dews and heavenly ſhowers that muſt revive your almoſt dying withering bleſſings. Repentance is that holy oil which muſt recover our lamps that are going out. Oh! the excellency of repentance!

From hence you may gather, what an excellent privilege a penitent heart hath with God. It is the mourning lamenting ſinners that is like to do England good; theſe hard-hearted ſinners cannot recover and almoſt loſt the Goſpel, they cannot fetch God again; but a penitent heart can.

Uſe 3. Is repentance the only way to prevent the judgments of God?———Then you may from hence gather, That when God hath his plagues upon a people, it is a ſign that thoſe people are very guilty of impenitency, and that this people hath not yet repented of their ſins. If God threatens you, O England, Scotland, and Ireland! If God threatens you to give you up to hardneſs of heart, and blindneſs of mind doth God do it at this day. If you ſee a kingdom groaning under the judgments of God, it is a ſign they have not made uſe of the remedies that would have cured them.

This is a charge againſt England, We have been a ſtiff-necked people.——O England, England, how long ſhall God wait on you before you repent? how often hath God threatned to remove the Goſpel from among you? how often hath God viſited you with great and grevious ſickneſſes? how many

houſands have been killed by the ſword? how many widows and fatherleſs children have there been left deſolate? God hath viſited you with mercy, and yet you repent not.

O my beloved, is not this ſad? If God come to puniſh you after you have received ſo many mercies from him, take heed that God doth not rid his hands of you. Why ſit you as if you had no hands in theſe things, you careleſs maſters, that never pray in your families, nor teach your families to pray? It is for your ſins that God doth threaten to remove his goſpel, and to take away his miniſters. Will you repent of your ſins? if you do not, ſad will be your ends. God may cut you off from the face of the earth, and raiſe up to himſelf a generation out of your loins, that may ſerve him better than you have done yet, and God may cauſe you to die in a wilderneſs.

Oh, the hard-heartedneſs of the people of England! Oh, the ſwearing, the wickedneſs, the ſuperſtition and prophaneſs that it is Grown up among us; that I may ſay, as the world was once drownded by water, ſo it is now almoſt filled with wickedneſs. Oh, you ſinful wicked Generation? is this your requital unto God for all his mercies? Deut. xxx. 6. Do ye thus requite the Lord O ye fooliſh people and unwiſe! is not he thy father that bought thee? hath he not made, and eſtabliſhed thee.

May I apply this to you? are theſe the thanks you return unto God, that hath been as a father to you, that hath bought you and made you? When your ſins grew ſo high, do ye not think the wrath of God will grow high too? Ay, but you ſay, Why do you ſpeak to us of the ſins? ſpeak to them as commit ſuch ſins.

My beloved, have you repented of your ſins? are you grown hard-hearted with the reſt of this generation? let me aſk you, have you repented of thoſe ſins you are guilty of? Yes, ſay you, we hope we have. Let me try you a little with theſe few things. Firſt, Have you thought upon the wickedneſs of your ways? Have you ſet your ſins in order before you Have you called to mind the manner of your lives and converſations? Sin is never ſo ill it is foundly laid to heart.

A repenting man is one that the world calls a moping man; he is one that will look in the gospel an hour to find out his spots; and when he hath found them he falls to weeping.

Secondly, If you have repented, as you say you have, what hath been your mourning for sin? — You came crying into the world. Since the first tears how many tears have you shed for your sins? when where you alone in your chamber? when have you done as Ephraim did? how often have your cheeks been wet with your tears? how many handkerchiefs have you wet with tears for your sins? O my beloved, do you think that God will not humble you before he exhalts you God will bring you to the brink of hell, before he brings you to heaven.

Thirdly, If you have repented of your sins, as you say you have, then what reformation is there in your lives? what sins have you left! what sins are they that you have forsaken? have you observed you are more humble than you were heretofore? do you observe that your hearts are more in heaven than they were before? do you observe that you pray more, and delight in prayer more than you have done; It may be you are ready to cry out, That your are well. Well but have you repented? Alas! you say you have repented of your sins, when it may be you know not of one sin that you have left. Didst thou once swear by the holy name of God, and are you afraid to take his name into thy mouth but with great reverence and adoration?

Fourthly, Have you repented of your sins, as you say you have?——— Then what reformation have you taken up for your obedience? is it your resolution for to seek God more in prayer than ever you have yet done? will you take more care of your family; will you give them an example of a holy heavenly life.

Fifthly have you repented of your sins, as you say you have? ——Then how much are you troubled for the sins of others? do your heart mourn in secret for the wickedness of the place where you live?

And now I beſeech you, do not flatter yourſelves in your wicked courſes. if you do, then I ſay, take heed that God doth not ſend his judgments upon you: and if you repent not, doubtleſs God will bring ſome plague upon England 'ere it be long.

Conſider this, O England, and do not provoke God to depart from you; for if you repent of your Sins. you may expect to live quietly in the land of your nativity, and go to your death-beds in peace and reſt; but if you will not repent of your Sins, then I ſay, expect nothing but curſings inſtead of bleſſings from God. If you will repent, do it to Day; God knows how long it may be before you have ſuch another opportunity.

The wellfare of your Soul depends upon it; the welfare of the Church depends upon it; the welfare of the three kingdoms depends upon it.

My beloved, it is no trifling now: Will you repent, I aſk you? It may be hereafter God will give you up to hardneſs of heart, and the blindneſs of mind; and if you go on in your wickedneſs, Hell will follow after.——Well, I ſay, will you repent; I aſk you the queſtion, and I aſk you no other queſtion than I have aſked my own ſelf, before I came into this place. I aſk you again, Will you repent, every man and woman among you; For Jeſus Chriſt is angry with you; he takes away many of your lights from you. That God is angry with you is plain, for God would never elſe have taken away his miniſters from among you.

I doubt not but God hath made uſe of ſome of thoſe that are to Speak no more in the name of Jeſus, to the

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ſnatching of you as firebrands out of the fire; and in bringing you from the kingdom of Satan, unto the kingdom of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Well, will you repent?——If you will not, your ſins lie at your own door; do not think it is a hard queſtion, when I aſk you if you will repent? There are two places where there is no repentance: The one is hell: it were a vain thing for me to go to the gates of hell, and and cry to them, Repent: for their day of grace is paſt, and their doom is paſt upon them. I verrily think there is more ſorrowing in Hell for Sin, than there is upon earth: but their ſorrow is not a ſanctified ſorrow.——If the damned in hell were delivered out of hell, they would Sin again: If they lived eternally, they would Sin eternally. But I am not ſpeaking to men and women in hell, but I ſpeak to you that are here upon earth.

Now, my beloved, I beſeech you, in the name and fear of God, that you will repent. The words of a dying man and woman uſually prevail with thoſe that hear. The dying words of fathers and mothers uſed to prevail with their children.—— My beloved, if you have any love to God, if you have any love to your ſouls, I ſay, repent of your Sins. It may be God has made me inſtrumental to the plucking ſome of you as fire brands out of the fire, and in building ſome of you up in the moſt holy faith.

Object. But may be ſome of you ſay, You bid me repent, how can I do it; I can no more repent than a dead man can ariſe.

Anſwer.

Answer. It is true, O sinner! what you say; But although thou canst not repent when thou wilt, yet if thou wilt but endeavour to set thyself about the work, it is probable, God may give the a repenting heart; therefore I say, take heed of shutting yourself out from mercy.

Object. But you say, Why do you then press us to such a work, when we cannot do it ourselves?

Answer. Mark here; When I say unto you, Will you repent? that is, Will you use the means God has appointed for your repentance; will you reckon up all the Sins you have committed against God? will you reckon up all the times you have been drunk, or that you have sworn an oath? Will you reckon up all the Sins you stand guilty of between God and your own souls? And will you go to God and beg of him that he would be pleased to pardon them?

But you say, What if we do not? If you do not, then ye are still in your Sins, and there is no peace to you; there is no inward peace to your souls, there is no true peace to your mind.

But that I may prevail with you, I shall give you some grounds or motives to press this argument more home upon your consciences. First of all, Repent because Jesus Christ hath commanded you under great penalties if you do not.

My beloved, consider with yourselves a little who it is speaks to you in the text. It is not I, but it is Jesus

as Christ; and doubtless, Christ would not have perſuaded you to this work of repentance, where it not neceſſary.

This book is the council of the phyſician of your ſouls, of your church and of your kingdom. He that ſaith unto you, Repent, ſaith, if you do not, your Sns ſhall not be blotted out. He that ſaith unto you, Repent, ſaith, if you do not, eternal death ſhall follow.

Repent, I ſay, or if thou do not, woe unto thee! woe unto him that ever he was born! woe unto thee, it had been better thou haſt never ſeen the light; Thy parents that bore thee, they may repent that ever thou wert born.——Oh! my beloved, it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living and powerful God;

Oh, my beloved, if your parents ſhould ſee any of you carried in a cart to the gallows to be hanged, it would make them repent that ever they brought you into the World? how much more then do you think, it would trouble you to ſee yourſelf thrown body and ſoul into hell, there to be tormented with the devil and his angels for ever? I ſay repent, or elſe God will take away the goſpel from among you: Repent, or God will take away his miniſters from among you.

Secondly, Repent, for Chriſt hath encouraged you with many precious promiſes, if you will repent.

Anſwer. My beloved, your reward is great: Would you know what you would have?——For your ſorrow you

you shall have crowns of Glory, you shall have joys unspeakable; if you will but repent of your Sins God will blot them out.———Methinks it should make thy heart ake, to think how God will deal with thee at the day of judgment: how God will say before all the holy angels, and before thousands of righteous persons, Look what hypocrites stand there! God will make known the most secret Sins, before men and angels, that thou wouldest not have men to know.

Oh repent therefore, that your Sins may be blotted out, and you shall never more hear of your Sins: Repent, and you shall be saved: Repent, and you shall escape Hell.

Thirdly, Repent, because God hath waited a long time upon you: How long hath God stayed at your doors, asking you if you would repent? how long, O thou proud man or woman! hath God waited upon thee? how often hath God come, and stood knocking at the doors of your hard-hearts, you that are given to taverns, and alehouses, and rioting; how long will it be before I shall see you leave those taverns and alehouses, and be upon your knees in your closet,

Oh, thou grey-headed sinner! God hath waited long upon thee: it may be ever since thou wert fifteen or sixteen years old; as I have known many eminent Christians at those years, which has made me much admire it. Oh, thou sinner, God hath waited upon thee all this while, when wilt thou repent? Rom. ii. 4. *Or despisest thou the riches of goodness and forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

There

There is not a bleſſing thou haſt from God, but this is written on it, Repent of thy ſins. Wilt thou think of what I ſay unto thee? When God puts thy bread into thy hands, he ſaith unto thee, Sinner, take this bread, eat it, and repent. When God puts the cup of beer into thy hand, he ſaith unto thee, Sinner, take this beer, drink it, and repent. When thou ariſeſt in the morning, he ſaith unto thee, Sinner, take this cloathing, put it on, and repent.

Every mercy thou receiveſt from thy God, calls thee to come along with me. ——— Come, wilt thou leave thy ſins and go along with me? wilt thou leave Hell, and go along with me———becauſe I am ſo urgent in preſſing this great work of repentance.

Fourthly, Conſider, if you will turn and repent, God will return to you; if you will leave your ſins, God will not be angrey with you; if you will have the means of Grace God will give you the means of grace.

My beloved, God never goes from you, till you go away from him. God hath created you to return, and God hath promiſed to retuan to you.

My beloved, you have heard the Parable of the prodigal ſon, how he ran away from his father; but at laſt, when he was ready to periſh with hungar he turned to his father's houſe again.

So, my beloved, God is your father, but you are prodigals; all the Sins you have committed againſt God is Prodigality. But yet, let me tell you, if you

are

are willing to come to God's Feet, he will take you [illegible] a Rock; if your Eye willing to forsake your Sin, God is ready and willing to pardon your Sins; if you have been a wicked, sinful, rebellious People, yet if you will turn to the Lord, he will turn to you.

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